BRITISH COLUMBIA;

ITS

Condition and Prospects,

SOIL, CLIMATE,

AND

MINERAL RESOURCES,

CONSIDERED.

By HENRY DeGROOT.

SAN FRANCISCO:
Printed at the Alta California Job Office, 124 Sacramento street, up stairs,
1859.

BRITISH COLUMBIA;

ITS

Condition and Prospects,

SOIL, CLIMATE,

AND

MINERAL RESOURCES,

CONSIDERED.

By HENRY DeGROOT.

SAN FRANCISCO:
Printed at the Alta California Job Office, 124 Sacramento street, up stairs,
1859.

PREFACE.

The contents of the following pages, were originally published in the columns of the *Daily Alta California*, where they appeared in a series of articles prepared for that paper. And although they have thus obtained a vast publicity, the writer has been encouraged to think it might serve a useful purpose, to present them in a collected shape, as furnishing in a narrow compass, the information most desired by the general reader, touching the country of which they treat. The proximity of our State to the gold fields of British Columbia, notwithstanding their unhappy experience, naturally attracts the attention of our people that way; and it was with a view to placing before them the most recent and reliable intelligence from that quarter, that the writer engaged in the humble work in question. It was for this, and not because of their literary merit, he has been led to collect these fugitive pieces and present them in their present more pretentious form.

BRITISH COLUMBIA:

ITS SOIL, CLIMATE, RESOURCES, &c.

Having spent the greater part of the past seven months traveling through the interior of British Columbia, in the capacity of newspaper correspondent, the writer has since his return been frequently applied to for information touching that region, by parties desirous of emigrating thither, or by others willing to canvass the inducements for doing so. As a means of answering those inquiries, and embodying the latest authentic intelligence from a quarter which, despite their recent disappointments, has not ceased to interest our people, he has determined to publish a short series of articles on the soil, climate and natural resources of that country, selecting as the medium the columns of our oldest and most widely extended journal. The writer engages in this task the more readily from the fact that he has, hitherto, found little inducement to publish any considerable portion of the copious notes kept while journeying over Vancouver's Island and the main land; and for the further reason, that his views as heretofore exhibited are lacking in entireness, several lengthy letters designed for publication having failed of that end through the uncertain modes of transmission incident to the remote localities where they were written.

This purpose, then, of placing before the public the information gleaned during his travels in a summary and consecutive shape, will form the author's excuse should certain of his ideas seem familiar to the reader, or should something of repetition appear in what he may now have to say. It will be his aim, however, to avoid reiterating what is already well known, and to adduce as many new facts in the present writing as he shall have in possession or be able to command. It constitutes no part of his plan to write a formal "Vindication of the Fraser River Mines;" or to frame apologies for the failures that have so frequently attended their working. This is a business to which he has not felt called—a work, the performance of which, in the absence of any disposition or motive on his part, must necessarily be left to others.

Yet it is but just a proper exposition should be given of the causes that led to these failures so continuous, general and disastrous, as to have well nigh destroyed all confidence in the mineral wealth of a country, which, but ten months ago, was, by many, deemed a rival, if not the peer, of California. Candor compels the admission that these untoward results were attributable to the precipitate action of the adventurers themselves, coupled with manifold and all but insuperable obstacles interposed between them and their field of operations, quite as much as to the limited area or non-productive character of the mines. A slight examination of the country to be penetrated, and of the circumstances under which this immigration took place, can hardly fail to confirm this opinion, and impress its justness upon every candid and dispassionate mind. No special pleading should be tolerated in behalf of these mines, nor should any attempts be winked at for glossing over the fearful perils and fatal catastrophies that attended their opening. We have had enough of this —and too much, as the thousands returning empty-handed, and the hundreds who will no more return at all, can testify. Still, it is meet the public be possessed of all the facts, to the end, that being fully advised they may fairly judge and intelligently act for themselves.

It is, moreover, important that the residents of California properly understand the relative postion of their own State and these new communities about being planted on their northern border, and that they fully appreciate the reciprocal advantages likely to arise therefrom in the future. This is a point on which, owing to a perverted sentiment of patriotism, or a narrow feeling of national jealousy, or, perhaps, to the low stand-point from which the subject has been viewed, there is much misapprehension in the minds of our citizens. We have been apt to consider these colonies of British Columbia and Vancouver as necessarily antagonistic to the interests and progress of California. It has been our wont to regard them simply as rivals—competitors entering the field to bid for population—decoying sojourners from our midst, and diverting newcomers from our shores. Some have even affected to see in these distant provinces, so situate on the outer verge of the British empire, the instruments wherewith England hopes to check our growth and impede our march to greatness, if indeed they may not be the germs of a power which is one day to arise and overshadow our Pacific Republics.

That England has great purposes to effect in this part of the world, is no doubt true; that she has grand projects on foot, looking to a union of her North American colonies, and

the opening of a highway from ocean to ocean, she does seek to disguise. That these new settlements on our north are yet to become competitors for the trade of the East, if not the commercial supremacy of the Pacific, it were useless to deny. Entrepots are soon to spring up on these hitherto undisturbed waters; there will be ship-yards and fisheries there, and to these lands will a numerous people go to dwell and to mine, beyond a peradventure. If we imagine such things will not come to pass, or flatter ourselves that we can retard them by our silence or defeat them by our opposition, the sooner we disabuse our minds of these beguilings the better. Yet, in all these aims of England, so bold, far-reaching, and vast, there is really nothing calculated to excite our hostility or alarm our fears; nothing which a magnanimous people should deprecate, or a young and enterprising nation dread.

On the contrary, this opposition is the very thing which, of all others, we most need, and which, instead of proving detrimental to our interests, would serve to promote them in a variety of ways. Of all the nations on the earth we, of California, are suffering the most, from the want of a stimulus to arouse our dormant energies—some outside pressure to terrify us into union and activity. Separated from the older communities, with their schemes of internal improvement and other excitant and energizing agents; penetrated by inert masses of savage and semi-barbarian life, and surrounded on every hand by peoples of low intellectuality and unaspiring aims; never did a State so much need the stimulus of a generous rivalry as ours. Out among the islands we encounter an enervated and decaying race, too poor to inflame our cupidity and too imbecile to provoke opposition; while stretched along our south lies poor, ill-faring, ill-fated Mexico, likewise dying, and too far gone to evoke the spirit of "high emprise," or engender a feeling of emulation within us; too far gone to be useful, even as an antagonizing agent, and henceforth to serve only as a sort of territorial catacomb, whence may be dragged a carcass ever as required by that false sense of aggrandizement, which lusts for lands without citizens, and dominion without power.

Thus circumstanced, we are fortunate in having a rival like England to arouse us from our torpidity, to stir our pride and spur us on in the noble contest for opulence and empire. Not only this, but the settlement of those territoritories so contiguous to our own, must speedily inure the great gain of our people by furnishing a steady and lucrative market for almost every species of their surplus products, especially those of the orchard, the dairy and the farm, since neither of these colonies will be able, for some time at least, to supply their own inhabitants with these staples. In a word, whatever brings immigration to this coast must necessarily advantage California and Oregon, as from them must be obtained the breadstuffs and other prime articles necessary for their subsistance. And so, again, any large influx of miners or other transient persons drawn this way, whether by the discovery of gold, or other attractions, must, in the end, augment the population of California, since the manifest superiority of her soil and climate will determine many of them to seek her borders when contemplating a permanent settlement.

Wherefore, view it as we may, while we should adhere strictly to facts in speaking of the resources of these colonies, and abstain from all undue effort at encouraging emigration thither, it little behooves the friends of California to underrate the advantages of her northern neighbor or seek to disparage her claims in the estimation of those abroad. It requires but an ordinary share of intelligence to see how certainly our welfare must be promoted by her growth, and how intimately our interests are connected with hers. The peopling of her territories will tend to populate ours; the increase of her affluence will add to our wealth, and the progress of her people must inevitably react on our own.

But however we may regard the advent of England upon our shores, or whatever estimate we may set on the value of her possessions in this quarter, one thing is certain, we have now got to meet her on this side the globe, as we have met her on the other, and encountering her enterprise and capital; her practical, patient industry and persistence of purpose, dispute with her for the trade of the East and the empire of the seas. It is no mean stake to play for this—a traffic which, in the middle ages having successively enriched the commercial republics of Venice, Genoa, and the towns of the Hanseatic, at a later period promoted Spain and Holland to the pinnacle of maritime greatness, has now come to be the subject of the grandest contest recorded in the history of commercial enterprise. The building of a trans-continental railroad, like the discovery of the Cape, will divert the trade of the Orient into a new channel, scattering affluence along its route and ultimately securing political predominance to the nation who shall enjoy it. Where it runs there will be population, and wealth and power; there will be cities and workshops and cultivated fields, with all the glorious attendants of civilization; and where it terminates there will be the emporium of the Pacific—the permanent metropolis of the Occidental world.

If England shall precede us in the accomplishment of this work she will have gained an advantage which we cannot readily overcome, and which must eventually force us into the rank of a second rate power. As yet, the field is clear, and we have a long way the start, yet all these advantages will be lost if we longer waste our time in idle dalliance, or suffer our action to be impeded by sectional jealousies and distracted councils. The time has come for harmonizing our differences and dismissing

these feelings of distrust—for uniting our efforts and entering vigorously on the prosecution of the great work to which our duty points, and our destiny invites us.

DUTY OF THE PRESS.

It being apparent, then, that the early settlement of the British Provinces on this coast, and the rapid development of their resources, both material and industrial, cannot fail to react beneficially on our own State, policy dictates that we encourage emigration thither by every convenient and laudable means in our power. That the newspaper press presents the most fit and available agent for effecting that purpose, by broadly diffusing correct information in regard to the country in question, must be obvious to all. Hence, the accomplishment of that object may well be considered a part of its legitimate duties, since it will tend to subserve the interests of our own people at the same time that it vindicates itself against the charge of dealing unjustly with those Colonies, and renders a good service to the world at large. Even if the favorable accounts thus promulgated should work the temporary withdrawal of a few thousand people from our shores, this same intelligence, acting on the populous communities of the Atlantic slope and the Old World, would soon more than compensate for that loss—bringing us five, perhaps, ultimately, ten inhabitants to supply the place of every one so abstracted. Wherefore, while it can hardly be said the journals of California have generally acted unfairly toward this, our first competitor for population and commercial power on the Pacific, it is yet to be hoped that whatever of seeming jealousy may heretofore have been manifested, or whatever of injustice may have been unwittingly done her, our newspaper press, acting in the liberal and catholic spirit of the age, will for the future secure our northern neighbor a full and candid hearing in their columns.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY.

Before proceeding to speak of the gold mines of British Columbia, it may be well, as a means of illustrating their position and routes of approach, to present a brief description of the geography and natural features of the country in which they are located.

The territory constituting what is now the Province of British Columbia, lies between the 49th and 57th degrees of north latitude, corresponding in area with what was formerly the department of New Caledonia. By the late act of Parliament, withdrawing it from the jurisdiction of the Hudson Bay Company, and erecting it into a Colony, it is bounded as follows: on the south, by the frontiers of the United States; on the east, by the main chain of the Rocky Mountains; on the north, by Simpson's river, and the Finlay branch of the Peace river, and on the west, by the Pacific Ocean. It embraces within its limits Queen Charlotte's Island, and all the other islands adjacent to the coast, except that of Vancouver. As thus bounded, it has Washington Territory on its southern, and the department of New Cornwall on its northern border; while its western is skirted by the waters of Queen Charlotte's Sound and the Gulf of Georgia, which, with their numerous canals and inlets deeply penetrating the main land, impart to the coast a very irregular outline. As will appear, from an inspection of its limits, British Columbia is an extensive region, being nearly 500 miles long, from north to south, and [illegible]00 wide, thus containing nearly 200,000 square miles, one-tenth more land than the State of California.

MOUNTAINS.

The southern and middle portions of this territory are generally rugged, being crossed by several mountain chains of considerable elevation and extent. The northern part is said to be more level. These mountains, which consist mostly of the Rocky, Cascade and Coast Range, with their various spurs, are so ramified and diffused as to constitute a single group rather than separate ranges. Their average height is between four and five thousand feet, though many of the peaks are much more lofty. Some of them lie in long ridges consisting of shapeless masses of rock; some are craggy, precipitous and impending, while others shoot up in splintered spires, or are rounded into huge domes like segments of a shattered world. The lower portions of these mountains are covered with forests, the higher with snow the entire year, which melting keeps the streams heading in, or running near them at a high stage until late in the summer. Nothing can exceed the grandeur of these snow-fields as seen from a distance on a clear day, or equal their loneliness and desolation as impressed on the mind when we come to visit them. Viewed from the trail along the deep valleys, they are apt to inspire the tourist with a wish to explore their cold and lustrous solitudes. A single day's travel, however, across their still and pathless wastes will be very likely to extinguish that feeling, especially if the journey be made in thin clothes, and on short rations, as the writer's experience enables him to attest.

RIVERS.

British Columbia is not only a land of mountains, but also of lakes and rivers, the latter being numerous, and in some instances, of large size. Of the entire number, Fraser river is much the largest, receiving, in fact, the waters of nearly all the others, as it passes longitudinally through the centre of the entire territory Its principal branches beginning at its mouth are, on the left side, Pitt, Harrison, Bridge, Chillicoaten, West-Road, Stuart and Salmon; on the right, Anderson, Thompson, Quesnel and Rough Poplar. It has besides, a vast number of smaller tributaries, many of which are swollen into considerable streams during summer. Most of its larger branches take their rise in extensive lakes and marshes that abound near their sources; the smaller chiefly head in the mountains and are fed by the melting snows.

None of these streams afford extended facilities for navigation, except the Fraser, which, at a stage of high water, can be ascended by

light draught steamers to Fort Yale, a point 110 miles above its mouth. Harrison river can, under like circumstances, be ascended to Harrison Lake, a distance of ten miles from its junction with the Fraser, securing steamboat navigation on that route, by means of the river and lake, for over fifty miles. Small steamers could also run on the Fraser between the Upper Cañon and Thompson's Fork, a stretch of twenty-five or thirty miles. The upper portions of this river, however, as well as nearly all the others throughout the territory, generally flow with a strong current, broken in many places by falls and rapids, and hence are little adapted to steamboat navigation.

LAKES.

British Columbia is in every part thickly studded with lakes, some of them of considerable magnitude, and nearly all remarkable for their great depth of water, a feature traceable no doubt, as a general thing, to the abrupt character of the mountains in which they are imbosomed. Some of even the smaller have been sounded to a depth of 400 feet without finding bottom. In shape, they are usually long and narrow, and in several instances lie in chains linked by connecting streams along deep depressions, to all appearance the beds of former rivers. Some of these lakes are between fifty and sixty miles long, and from eight to ten broad. The water is cold the year round, and, for the most part, exceedingly clear. To this, however, there are exceptions, as, for example, the Lillooet, the color of which is a dirty green, caused probably by its feeders running over a species of argillaceous earth, that imparts to the water its turbid appearance. A few of the smaller are somewhat alkaline, but not to a degree that forbids their use. During the summer months salmon of an excellent quality abound in both the rivers and lakes, and form the principal food of the natives, who take them in large quantities, consuming what they require while fresh, and curing the balance for winter use. The salmon season extends from June to October.

CLIMATE.

The climate of the Pacific coast, as is well known, is no where so severe in the same parallel of latitude as that of the Atlantic, the difference varying from 15 to 20 degrees—that is, we have to go some 1,200 miles further north on the Atlantic side of the continent to find a mean-winter temperature corresponding to that on the Pacific side. And though the climate of British Columbia forms no exception to this rule, it is somewhat varied, certain belts of country being warm and dry, while others are moist and of a more equitable temperature. Thus we have a district extending from the mouth of Fraser river inland about 150 miles characterized by a humid climate, and in which the thermometer of Fahrenheit rarely falls below ten or rises above ninety degrees in the course of the year. Throughout this region rain is abundant during the spring, summer and autumn, falling not only in frequent showers, but continuing sometimes for several days together. Snow also falls here in the winter from one to two feet, often more in the northern part of the district, though hardly so much near the sea. It is not apt to lay more than a week or two at a time, it then melting and the ground remaining bare for a like interval, to be again succeeded by another fall, and so on throughout the winter, which generally breaks up in the early part of March. The damp and cloudy weather here prevalent during the summer prevents the heat reaching so high a point as further in the interior. When the atmosphere is clear heavy dews fall at night, and fogs at all seasons of the year are common.

Beyond this wet section of country, the northern limits of which crosses the Lillooett route in the vicinity of Anderson's lake, and the Fraser between the Uper Cañon and the Forks, lies a district of about equal breadth, characterized by greater heat and aridity, and which though situate further north and generally more elavated, is scarcely any colder in the winter, and has even less snow than the country further south along the lower Fraser. North of this, again, is another belt having a more humid climate, showers being frequent in the summer, and the winters somewhat more rigorous.

Taken altogether then, the climate of British Columbia though subject to much fluctuation, and varying with locality, cannot be considered one of great severity, neither the heat of summer nor the cold of winter reaching such extremes as in Canada, or the northern States of the Union. As evidence on this point, it may be stated that the snow along the valleys of the Upper Fraser and its tributaries, rarely ever exceeds eighteen inches in depth, and for the most part does not even reach six inches, while a great portion of the time there is none at all on the ground during winter. The larger lakes never freeze over, nor does the Fraser or other large streams ever close entirely up. Stock is able to subsist on the bunch grass throughout the winter, and even work animals keep in tolerable condition on the rushes that grow in the bottoms without other feed. On the divides and more elevated places, the depth of snow as well as the degree of cold, depends of course on the height of the locality; the traveller encountering snow in some places he may have to pass, twice as deep as that found in the valleys There was no snow or frost of any consequence on the Upper Fraser river last year, until about the first of December, when the weather suddenly became cold, the snow falling to a depth of five or six inches, and even a foot, on the lower part of the river. The smaller streams and the ditches at the same time became covered with ice, and the ground froze to the depth of several inches, interfering seriously with, and for the most part putting a stop to mining operations. This weather after continuing for two or three weeks, moderated, and for the next five weeks

but little snow fell, while the thermometer in two or three instances only, went below 20 degrees, fluctuating between that point and 45 degrees.

After this mild period came another spell of cold and varying weather, which held for three or four weeks, when the snow and ice mostly disappeared, and the Indians leaving their winter houses, declared that season at an end.

The miners also got to work in their claims, and have not since been interrupted. This was early in the month of March, since which time the weather has been constantly growing warmer, the thermometer having fallen but a few times below the freezing point. During March the weather was showery, with some slight frosts and falls of snow in the early part of the month.

Much the same kind of climate as above described, prevails throughout the regions lying between and bordering on the Kamloops and Great Okinagan lakes, as well as the extensive districts to the north and east.

SOIL.

About the mouth of Fraser river, and extending up that river forty or fifty miles, the country is mostly level and somewhat swampy. With the exception of a few small prairies, and some inconsiderable clearings near Fort Langley, it is covered with a dense and heavy growth of timber, as are also the adjacent mountains as high as the limit of vegetation, above which they are clad with perpetual snow. The lower portions of this flat land near the mouth of the river are nothing but an extended marsh, being overflowed by the tides and the stream at its higher stages, and from the tall thick growth of flags with which they are covered strongly resemble the tule lands of California. The soil of the prairies and dryer parts, consists of a black vegetable mold, being warm and fertile and capable of producing abundantly of vegetables and cereals, as the spots about Fort Langley, cultivated for many years to grain and potatoes, amply prove. In places, however, there is rather too large an admixture of sand with a substratum, of gravel and decomposed granite, causing the soil to leach and thus readily part with its fertilizing properties. The prairies are covered with rank grass from which the Company have been in the habit of making hay for their winter use.

On the southern limit of this flat country and lying partly on either side of the line, is the Smess prairie, of great fertility and considerable extent, which, together with the Chilliwhaick and also the Lilooett meadows at the head of Lilooett lake, will hereafter claim a more particular notice as constituting the most valuable portions of the district under consideration.

In passing north we next come to the country of the Upper Fraser, with its dry climate, fertile bottoms, table lands and prairies covered with bunch grass and scattered pine trees. Here there is a great deal of good land, equally fit for gardening and farming with an unlimited amount of pasturage, grass growing everywhere, even to the tops of the mountains. The only drawback to the successful cultivation of the soil in this region would be the drouth, which might render irrigation necessary except in the more moist and fertile bottoms. That much of the soil is sufficiently rich in itself to produce good crops, admits of no doubt, yet to insure that result irrigation, for which there are, fortunately, great facilities, might, in many cases, be required. The same remark will probably apply with equal force to the vast region east of the Cascade Range, where, it is admitted, there are large bodies of land possessing a very prolific soil, and supplying exceedingly desirable places for settlement.

SCENERY.

The scenery in almost every part of British Columbia is unique, bold and impressive, while in some sections it assumes an aspect of wild and gloomy grandeur. Vast mountains, cleft to the base by hideous fissures, gigantic forests tangled with undergrowth, sullen lakes shaded by lofty cliffs and skirted by sedgy fenlands, sunless valleys, arid plains and rolling praries, majestic rivers, cascades, snow-peaks, precipices and foaming torrents form some of the prominent features of the scenery everywhere met with. To the east of the Cascade range the scenery is less striking and varied than elsewhere, though scarcely less attractive, the country abounding in fertile bottoms, watered by numerous wood-fringed streams, and in high praries covered with grass and flowers and a scanty growth of trees. The same description of soil and scenery applies to the valley of Salmon river, and all the southern tributaries of Thompson's Fork, as well as to the region about Lake Sushwap and the great Okinagan. In going north on the Upper Fraser and its branches, some variation in the landscape is observable; the plains are narrower and the mountain sides more wall-like; springs and streams are more frequent, and timber more plentiful, the hills being often well wooded, and the praries embossed with clumps of trees. A novel and highly picturesque feature is here presented in the terraced banks and park-like parterres running for miles along the deep-chasmed Fraser. Nothing can surpass the beauty of these table lands rising in regular gradations, often three or four tier high, and extending back a great distance, their slopes as even and their angles as sharp as if they had been shaped by the hand of man. Indeed, it is hard to believe, in view of their uniform declivity and clean cut edges, that something of art has not been employed in laying them out, or governing their construction.

In truth, there is scarce any part of this territory in which even the untutored eye fails to detect something calculated to awaken pleasurable emotions; some object in nature appealing to our appreciation of the beatiful and vast. The snow cones, when the sky is clear, are especially fitted to arrest the attention and

challenge the admiration of even the most stolid and prosaic. Cold, pure and sky-piercing, the nearest, though afar off, seem strangely present, while the more distant, as they recede further and further, fade into cloud-like pavilions scarce distinguishable from the atmosphere into which they seem about to dissolve. Hardly less grand, and even more attractive, are the water-falls often met with in the mountainous districts. Sometimes these have a perpendicular fall of a hundred feet or more; sometimes they rush down the mountain sides in a straight shoot two or three thousand feet, the water so dashed into foam that it resembles long frills of drifted snow, or wavy threads of silver. Occasionally there are startling sounds as well as strange sights to arrest the attention of the traveler in these solitudes. At times a heavy sound like buried thunder may be heard issuing from the cavernous gates, and resounding through the chambers of the mountains. It is an avalanche or land-slide, things not unfrequent when the snow melts and the frost leaves the ground on the approach of warm weather. Taken altogether, the scenery of British Columbia is exceedingly picturesque, varied and majestic, affording a rich and ample field for the explorations of the tourist, as well as the inquiries of the *savant* and the study of the artist, some of whom have already sought it in the prosecution of their researches and the exercise of their calling.

SALUBRITY.

That the climate of Vancouver's Island, as well as of the main land, is extremely favorable to health is pretty well established by the experience of the large number who visited that section last year; as also by the testimony of the old residents, nearly all of whom have been remarkably exempt from disease. Notwithstanding the hardship, deprivation and exposure to which thousands of the Fraser river adventurers were subjected, and the severe labor they were called upon to perform, there was very little sickness amongst them, while the deaths from disease were almost none at all. When it is considered that these men were, as a general thing, very unfavorably situated for the preservation of health—many of them proceeding to the mines in open boats, crossing a stormy gulf in their passage, toiling up rapid streams week after week, encamping on the damp ground, almost constantly wet from the falling rains, or wading in ice-cold water, exhausted with dragging their boats up rapids, or making portages round falls; often annoyed by Indians, and not unfrequently suffering from insufficiency of food—it speaks well for the sanitary character of the climate that they should have experienced such a general immunity from sickness and disease. Not only so, but these men, with scarcely an exception, increased largely in flesh at the very time they were being subjected to these deprivations and toils—adding to their weight beyond precedent, and enjoying more robust health than ever before. It was no uncommon thing to hear men boast of this increment, which in some cases, was really quite extraordinary.

The circumstances under which the first emigration to Fraser river took place, were certainly as little conducive to health as those attending the early settlement of the California mines, yet the proportional amount of sickness in the two cases, shows greatly to our disadvantage—the difference being as three to one against us.

The most frequent cause of ailment in British Columbia has, thus far, been rhumatism; apparently the only endemic disease as yet developed in the country; though it does seem a little strange that fever and ague should scarcely be known, though there is much overflowed and marshy land, productive of those miasmatic exhalations on the presence of which this malady is dependent. That this maleria is so little virulent is probably owing to the fact that the district where it most prevails, is situate near salt water, being thus influenced by the sea breezes and the tides. But whatever the cause, it is undeniable that the climate of British Columbia is both invigorating and salubrious, and one to which the immigrant may repair with as little apprehension as to any other on the coast, or perhaps any other on the face of the globe.

INDIANS.

The native races dwelling in the territory of British Columbia, although resembling each other in their physical appearance and other leading characteristics, indicating identity of origin, are still divided into numerous tribes, each having a distinct name, and for the most part, speaking a different language. In some instances they seem to have been grouped into larger communities or confederations, having the same appellation, being that perhaps of the most powerful or influential of their number. In other cases names have been supplied them by the whites, but which, suggested often by mere caprice or accident, do not appear to have been recognized very fully by the aborigines themselves. Thus the term Carrier was applied at an early day to the tribes living along the upper Fraser; and still later the word *Couteau* was used to designate not only the inhabitants, but also the country further south; it being a corruption of the Indian *Nicoutameen*, the name of a numerous tribe on the lower Fraser, and which from its resemblance to the French, *couteau*, a knife, was readily converted into that term by the voyageurs. The application of a word of such sanguinary significance to this people, was somewhat *mal appropo*, since, as would seem, they were rather distinguished for their pacific proclivities, than otherwise. At best, there would appear to have been much confusion in the manner of naming these tribes, scarce two authorities agreeing as to the title by which any particular portion of them should be known, or the precise limits of their territorial possessions. Some writers have made the entire number of people occupying this region to consist of two great nations; the Takali

or Carriers, at the north, and the Atnahs or Sushiwaps further south. Some have divided them into Chilcotins, Kuz Lakes, Naskotins, Talkotins and Atnahs or Chin Indians. While others have designated them by still different names, or assigned to them boundaries widely diverse. From all which it is evident their tribal limits are illy defined, and their geographical nomenclature sufficiently crude and unsettled.

To account for this confusion and illustrate how these territorial boundaries may be made to suffer a nominal expansion, a case of recent occurrence might be cited as in point. The Lillooett nation, once powerful, but now reduced to a few hundred persons, having given their name to a lake and river near their village, the same came afterwards to be applied to the new route opened by Government along these waters, and, finally to the country adjacent, until at present the whole region is in popular parlance termed the Lillooett, and it is common to hear both whites and Indians speak of going to the *Lilooett*, when perhaps they simply mean the terminus of the Trail, or other point far distant from the home of that people. Extended inquiry, however, into this branch of knowledge, could hardly prove profitable, since the Indian notions on the subject are quite as crude and indefinite as those of the whites. Nor is it at all a matter of practical moment, since in addressing these races, it will be found a sufficient lingual attainment to have mastered the terms "Siwash" and "Clootchman," these being well understood by all, and as likely to insure attention as words expressive of individual or national entity.

Each village, or tribe, is governed by a *Tyhee*, or chief, whose authority, though rather arbitrary, does not seem to be very extended or well defined, being as much dependant on personal prowess and wealth, as on any fixed rules or hereditary rights. The amount of property possessed by these Sagamores, such as canoes, horses, blankets, guns, wives, slaves, etc., mostly determines the extent of their influence, and consequent authority, not only with their own people but also with their neighbors. By the same rule is measured the degree of honor to be awarded them after death. Besides these leading men, there are *Sitcum Tyhees*, or half chiefs, who aid the principals in the discharge of their duties, or act for them in their absence.

A fierce spirit of animosity prevails amongst many of these tribes; a feeling that formerly manifested itself in sanguinary wars, wherein whole communities were cut off or reduced to slavery. Since the presence of the whites amongst them, this hostility has been so far restrained as to spend itself for the most part in private feuds, murders and petty skirmishes, with occasional forays on a weaker neighbor, often attended with circumstances of treachery and cruelty, and almost always conducted in a manner reflecting unfavorably on the magnanimity and courage of the party assailant. To pretend, however, that these Indians are any worse, or to claim that they are any better than like races elsewhere, or to say there is any more or any less virtue and intelligence extant amongst them, would be disingenuous, and argue an ignorance of savage life generally. As with similar types of men elsewhere, their virtues are few and feeble, their vices multiplied and inveterate—appetite being apt to predominate over the sense of right, and passion over reason; yet they are by no means a dangerous people to dwell amongst, or a difficult one to manage, as the success of the Hudson's Bay Company in their dealings with them fully shows. The tribes about Kamloops and on the upper Fraser, even to the far north, are especially honest, intelligent and tractable, and withal, generally well disposed towards the whites. They are also physically greatly the superiors of the tribes further south, being much more athletic and well formed. Their features, too, are, as a general thing, more regular and prominent, some of them having a contour of face highly classical; a circumstance less attributable, perhaps, to any original superiority of the race, than to the presence of the whites amongst them. Indeed, it is well known that the Jesuit missionaries, at an early period in the colonial history of Canada, in their zeal to propagate the tenets of the church, penetrated to the remotest parts of the continent, carrying their religion far beyond the limits of civilization, and planting it on the distant banks of the Saskatchawan and the Fraser. Here for years, secluded from the world, these holy men labored with results so beneficial to the spiritual and material nature of their neophytes as have led the devout to canonize them for their self-denying toil, and the physiologist to infer that the Good Fathers had impressed something of their own physical lineaments on these rude children of the wilderness, while seeking to engraft the shoots of evangelical truth on their simple faith.

The extent to which the efforts of these early heralds of the Gospel were successful, is evinced not only in the somewhat improved morality of these northern tribes, but also by the extent of their knowledge of the cardinal doctrines, and their familiarity with the ceremonial observances of the church. The stranger is surprised on falling in with these people to find them making the sign of the cross in token of their Christian belief, while kneeling, genuflexion and the murmuring of set prayers are practiced on every befitting occasion. The crucifix is universally regarded as an object of veneration, and it is related by the *voyageurs* who have penetrated far into the interior, that it is no uncommon thing to find rude cross es painted on the lodges and deserted huts, or cut on the trees in those distant wilds, to which the natives bow in daily adoration, paying them genuine homage as the emblems of a higher and better faith, taught them by men who came to benefit and bless, instead of cheat and despoil them, as has since too often

been the practice of the whites. As evidence of the progress made by these people, not in the mere rituals only, but also in the essential doctrines of the Christian religion, as well as of their generally enlightened notions of morality and justice, an incident may be adduced that occurred at the Fountain in January last: An Indian, belonging to the village at that place, having committed a trifling offence, fled to the north, taking refuge with a powerful tribe, governed by a chief named *Guillaume*, in the neighborhood of Fort Alexander. This personage, whose authority is very extended, being recognized in a general way by most of the tribes north of the Fountain, and who had already heard of the difficulties between the Indians and the whites the preceding summer, instead of screening the fugitive by affording the coveted protection, had him arrested, and setting out with a numerous retinue, brought him in mid-winter all the way to the Fountain, a distance of nearly two hundred miles, where he delivered him into the charge of Alexander MacCrellish, then an official at that place.

This gentleman, in view of the trifling nature of the alleged offence, handed the accused over to his own people, to be dealt with as they might see fit. A council having been called, and the case examined, the prisoner was found guilty, and condemned to be publicly whipped, a sentence that was forthwith carried into effect. This species of punishment is one of which the Indian has a special dread, not so much for the physical pain attending as the social degradation attaching to its infliction. After receiving it, the culprit, unless previously rendered insensible to shame, is apt to avoid, for the time being, the society of his fellows, and withdrawing, sit apart, bowed down with a sense of humiliation. From the stigma of his disgrace he is not readily relieved, unless restored to good standing at the time by those who have decreed his punishment—an act of clemency frequently extended to the culprit on his manifesting a due degree of contrition, coupled with the promise of amendment. Our hero on this occasion, having placed himself in this category, was graciously reinstated by the considerate and kind hearted *Guillaume*, who had just before passed sentence upon him. The act of grace was conducted as follows:—A bountiful feast having been prepared—the supplies generously donated by Mr. MacCrellish—all the principal men were gathered about the board, after which, a blessing having been invoked in true Christian style, the transgressor was beckoned to draw near. This he did, approaching on his knees, when the old Chief, placing his hands on the repentant's head, kindly soothed his sorrow and quited his sobs, whispering to him in the meantime words of consolation and encouragement, and finally imploring the aid of the Great Spirit to strengthen his good resolutions, pronounced a benediction, declared his forgiveness, and invited him to partake of the repast, a privilege denied other attendants.

From the above, it will be seen that these people, however we may call them savages, or treat them as such, are by no means deficient in the religious sentiment, or ignorant of the code of Christian ethics. It is not always that criminal cases are adjudicated with so much good sense as in the example just recited; nor is it every tribunal that so effectually attains the true aims of punishment, while it so fully vindicates the claims of justice. Indeed, a finer instance of well directed benevolence—of the rigor of law, tempered with merited clemency, is not often met with. Nor would it be easy to find, even within the pale of civilized life, one endowed with more native goodness, or whom we would so instinctively trust, as this same unschooled Chief of the Carrier Nation. When looking into his calm and benignant face, one can hardly believe that the labors of the contemned and world-feared Jesuit were all fruitless of good, since he sees the reflex of their teachings there, and reads in every act of this old man's life a living illustration of the doctrines of Jesus.

The foregoing case has been presented thus broadly not so much for its intrinsic interest, as because it serves to throw light on the condition and character of a race with whom some portion of our own people may hereafter come in contact, inasmuch as they inhabit a district in which the most prolific part of the Fraser river mines is supposed to be located. Being timely advised as to the disposition or other peculiarities of the natives, those entering their territory will know how to approach and regulate their intercourse with them, thus securing advantages that might otherwise be lost, and avoiding difficulties into which, through ignorance or misapprehension, they might be betrayed. As has been stated then, the Indians on the upper Fraser are morally and physically superior to the tribes further south, as well as those generally met with on American territory. And although they are averse to having the whites enter their country, there will be no active opposition, once they find it inevitable. Indeed, by the observance of a little tact and good management, the new comers may not only gain easy ingress to the country, and procure the objects of their visit in peace, but also secure the friendship of the natives and render them highly serviceable to them in their labors.

There are two lines of policy or modes of treatment, either of which is tolerably effective in the conduct of our intercourse with the Indians. One of these adopts the plan of yielding to his caprices, falling in with his notions, and accommodating ourselves to his peculiarities and modes of living, as is apt to be the practice of the French. The other consists in treating him with kindness and justice, but at the same time making few concessions to his views or wishes while we sternly mould him to our own purposes, and compel him to yield in everything essential to our success and comfort.

Either of these modes, as has been stated, if

consistently carried out, will answer very well, but it is the misfortune of the Americans that while they attempt both they adhere strictly to neither, it being too much their custom to bully and abuse the Indian at one time, thus arousing his enmity and opposition, and to trifle with him at another thereby encouraging him to disobedience and incurring his contempt. By pursuing a course dignified but conciliatory, kind but firm, the troubles, or rather miserable squabbles, into which our people are so apt to be involved, might for the most part be avoided. Let it be borne in mind that the tribes of which we are speaking are not the degraded, sensual creatures elsewhere met with, ready to submit tamely to the indignities of the white man, or pander to his lust. With these, female purity is carefully preserved and highly prized—conjugal infidelity or other species of incontinence being of rare occurrence. If our people will bear these facts in mind, and regulate their conduct accordingly, they will have little to fear from the opposition or enmity of these not very sanguinary, nor yet altogether savage tribes.

POSTS OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY.

Located in various parts of British Columbia the Hudson's Bay Company have a number of forts or trading establishments for carrying on their traffic with the native tribes. These posts generally bear the name of some member of the Company, or other individual prominent in their service. They are all constructed on the same general plan, differing only as to the number or dimension of their buildings, being governed in these particulars by the importance of the trade at the point where they are located. In founding a post reference is always had to accessibility, the number of Indians, and the abundance of fur-producing animals in the neighborhood. It is also desirable that there be some good land convenient, that a sufficient supply of grain and vegetables may be raised for the wants of the place. These latter, however, and even bread have often to be dispensed with by these hardy employés of the Company, their only food being salmon or other fish, with such wild fruits as the Indians may gather, and an occasional contribution of game. Of the latter they obtain but a very scanty supply, every species of animal being scarce throughout the Territory owing to the pertenacity with which they have long been hunted both for their petries and flesh. Yet, at a number of these establishments, not only gardening but also farming, has been carried on to a considerable extent, while large numbers of neat cattle have been raised and n some instances also sheep.

The site selected for these forts is generally a spot on the bank of a lake or river, sufficiently elevated to command the surrounding country. The buildings are constructed of hewed timber, and vary from a single block-house to fifteen or twenty in number. They consist of one or two large houses for the accommodation of the officers and clerks, and others, the quarters of the laborers and mechanics; also spacious storehouses for the reception of goods and furs, with shops for carpenters, coopers, blacksmiths, &c., and a powder magazine, built of brick or stone. The more important posts have, in addition, a school-house and chapel. The whole establishment is surrounded by a stockade fifteen or twenty feet high, inside of which, near the top, is a gallery, with loop-holes for muskets. This picket-work is flanked with bastions of which there are generally two, placed at diagonal corners These mount several small pieces of cannon and are also amply pierced for musketry. Seen from a distance these posts present a rather formidable appearance, and though capable of offering but slight resistance to artillery, have ever been found sufficient to overawe the Indian or resist his attacks.

FORT LANGLEY.

In ascending Fraser river, the first fort arrived at is Langley, on the south bank of the river, twenty-five miles from its mouth. It is an old and extensive establishment, at present under the supervision of Mr. Yale. The Company have a large farm at this place, with a considerable amount of stock. The land, cleared of heavy timber, is said to produce good crops, and in the garden attached to the fort vegetables grew last summer with the greatest luxuriance, while the apple trees were loaded down with fruit. There are many little prairies in the neighborhood, which being covered with coarse grass, afford ample feed for stock as well as hay for winter use. The Company had large stores of goods at this post last season, it being a sort of distributing point to places above, and to which many of the miners and traders came for supplies. There is an Indian village on the opposite side of the river containing the remnant of a once numerous tribe, but like most of the race in this part of the country, they have become not only greatly reduced in numbers but sadly demoralized, and it is questionable whether their services or trade can hereafter prove of much advantage to the Company, or any one else.

FORT HOPE

Is the next post met with in going up the river, on the same side with Langley, and seventy miles above it. It is an old settlement, at present in charge of Mr. Walker, and consists of three block buildings within a picketed inclosure. Being of limited capacity and somewhat dilapidated, additional houses have been erected for the accommodation of the very extensive trade carried on, this place having thus far proved the head of steamboat navigation. Suitable steamers, it is thought, can run to Fort Yale during high water, the *Umatilla* having reached that point once last summer. The passage, however, will always be attended with difficulty and some degree of danger.

FORT YALE.

This place is fourteen miles above Fort Hope and on the opposite or west bank of the river. The original post consisted of a single log hut,

of small dimensions, without any palisade or other military surroundings. Last year a large block store in addition was erected. This has since been kept well stocked with goods, which have been sold at a moderate profit, however the market might at times have justified higher prices. The post is named after Mr. Yale, now, as has been stated, Chief Trader at Langley. He is an old and efficient servant of the Company, having been on Fraser river over thirty years, during which time he has been but once absent from the Territory. Mr. Alvord is at present Superintendent at this place.

FORT DALLAS AND FORT BERENS.

The former of these posts is situated about fifty miles above Fort Yale, on the east bank of the river, and three miles below the mouth of Thompson's Fork. It is named after Mr. Alex. G. Dallas, a son-in-law of Governor Douglas, a gentleman whose efficient services and liberal views have alike secured him the confidence of the Company and the respect of the public, and who, in the estimation of all, is deemed justly to merit the compliment thus paid him. The buildings not yet occupied, being in an unfinished state, are located on a handsome grassy eminence, overlooking the river, toward which it slopes with an even and gentle declivity. They will be completed and brought into use the present summer, there being a numerous mining population in the vicinity. Fort Berens, also named after a member of the Company, is situated on the same side of the river, fifty miles above Fort Dallas, at a point opposite the terminus of the new trail opened through the Lillooett country to the upper Fraser. It occupies a magnificent table land, commanding a view for many miles up and down the river, and though laid out on an extensive scale, is in a still more unfinished state than Fort Dallas; yet, like the latter, is to be finished and occupied during the present spring or summer.

FORT KAMLOOPS.

Making a deflection one hundred miles east, we arrived at Fort Kamloops, also called Fort Thompson. It is situated on the North Branch of Thompson's Fork, near its junction with the main stream, and a little above the head of Sushwap Lake, in the midst of an extended and highly fertile bottom. It is the only post the Company have in the interior of British Columbia to the east of Fraser river—Fort Colville, on the Columbia, at one time thought to be on the English, having been ascertained by the late survey to be on the American side of the line. It is the intention of the Company to carry it to their own side this summer, and re-erect it under the name of Fort Shepherd, as a mark of respect for the present Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. There are several hundred acres of land under cultivation near Fort Kamloops, a large proportion being planted to potatoes, which grow here with little culture, and of an excellent quality. Wheat and other cereals also thrive well, the yield being abundant and the crop quite certain. There is also a fine range for stock in the neighborhood, the cows and oxen, of which there are several hundred head, with a large number of horses, keeping fat through the summer, and in tolerable condition through the winter, though none except the working animals receive any fodder, unless, perhaps, it be a little straw. The Indian Chief, Paul, living near the Fort, owns a large amount of stock, the sale of which to the whites of late has rendered him quite wealthy. This post is under the management of chief trader McLean, a man held in great awe by the surrounding savages, from his summary and decisive manner of dealing with offenders. Indeed, he is quite remarkable for his reckless intrepidity, even amongst a class distinguished for cool and determined courage.

FORT ALEXANDRIA.

Returning, and follwing up the Fraser over 150 miles above Fort Berens, we arrive at Fort Alexandria, or as it is commonly called, Alexander, being named after Sir Alexander MacKenzie, who indicated the spot as favorable for a station as early as 1793. Having reached this point on his journey of exploration, this celebrated traveler being advised by the natives of the dangerous navigation of the river below, and conscious that he was already near the Pacific, directed his course toward the west, and stricking the Salmon river, followed it to its disemboguement in one of those deep canals that penetrate the coast of British Columbia in such a remarkable manner. It is the principal post of the company in this region, being a sort of depot for receiving the produce gathered at the stations still further on, of which there are a number, all however of secondary importance. This Fort is situated on the east bank of the Fraser, nearly in latitude 52° N. The country adjacent is open and picturesque, and is said to afford good hunting grounds, whence the Indian procuring an abundant supply of skins, that trade has always been active at this point.

To the southwest of Alexandria, some fifty miles, is Fort Chilcotin, on a river, near a lake, and in the country of a tribe all bearing the same name. These people were once numerous, and their land abounding in beaver and other fur-producing animals, it was deemed advisable to establish a post amongst them. Subsequently, however, their number being reduced through war and disease, their trade proved profitless, and this station like several others further north, has been abandoned or is occupied only as occasion may require. In this catalogue may be enumerated Fort George, one hundred miles north of Fort Alexandria, at the junction of Stuart and Fraser rivers, and the still more inconsiderable stations of Fort Fraser, McLeod and St. James.

FORT SIMPSON.

The only remaining post requiring special mention is that of Fort Simpson, situated on Chathams Sound, in the extreme northwest corner of British Columbia, adjacent to the Russian Possessions. Located on a fine har

bor, the neighboring waters abounding in fish, and the land in wild animals, the centre of a large number of active and thrifty tribes, it enjoys a large and lucrative trade. It is the mart for all the various northern Indians, being frequented not only by those on the main land, but also by the inhabitants of Queen Charlotte's Island, and the Russian Possessions. It is called after Sir George Simpson, formerly a Governor of the Company, and is frequently visited by steamers from Victoria, which carry up large quantities of goods adapted to the Indian trade, and return freighted with the commodities procured in exchange.

GOLD MINES—THEIR EARLY HISTORY.

The existence of gold on Thompson's Fork, and possibly on other tributaries of the Fraser, has been known to the Hudson Bay traders for the last five or six years, the Indians having been in the habit of bringing in small quantities and exchanging it for other commodities during this time. Mr. McLean, Chief Trader at Kamloops, procured some dust from the natives as early as '52, since which period more or less has been received at this and other posts of the Company, chiefly on Fraser river. The amount thus obtained, though perhaps considerable in the aggregate, was not so large as commonly conjectured, having been insufficient to awaken a suspicion in the minds of these traders that diggings remunerative to white labor existed in that quarter; at least so little did they concern themselves about the matter, that others were left to make the final discovery which has resulted in so rapidly populating the country. The finding of paying placers in this region was not an event, however, of such sudden or recent occurrence as is generally supposed, various parties having prospected the banks of Thompson's river and its branches at different times since the opening of the Colville mines in the fall of '55, and always with results showing that moderate wages could be made on that stream, though not such as would then justify men remaining, the prices of provisions being enormously high, and the Indians disposed to be troublesome. During the summer and fall of '57, a number of persons, being mostly adventurers from Oregon and Washington Territories, or the Colville mines, together with a sprinkling of half-breeds and Canadian French, formerly in the Company's service, made their way into the country on the upper Fraser, where, prospecting in the neighborhood of the forks, they found several rich bars, on which they went to work, continuing operations with much success, until forced to leave from want of provisions or the approach of cold weather. Coming to Victoria, or returning whence they came, these men spread abroad the news of their good luck and laid the foundation for the excitement that soon after followed.

This intelligence reached San Francisco early in '58, and being confirmed by subsequent reports, spread rapidly through the State, affecting every class, and causing a general stampede, until culminating about the middle of July, the movement had transferred full twenty thousand people from California to this new field of enterprise and exertion. How this all turned out in the end it is now useless to inquire, nor is it worth while to attempt indicating the particular agencies through which it was brought about. Some have attributed it to the efforts of the shipping interest operating through the press, while others, with more reason and fairness, have detected its main spring in the private advices sent from the mines, and the naturally impulsive spirit of our people, who, in like case, have ever shown a *penchant* for acting first and deliberating afterwards. That the newspaper press can be justly charged with any such complicity no well informed person will contend, since it would be difficult to find a single line in the editorial columns of any journal in the State calculated to magnify the wealth of those mines, or encourage emigration thither. If the directors of the press published letters, or extracts from other papers calculated to produce that end, it was simply discharging their duty as impartial journalists, which requires they shall present every side of a question engaging the public attention, however it may conflict with individual interest or their own private opinions.

The truth is, every class of persons was more influenced by private letters received from parties who had already proceeded to Fraser river than by anything that appeared in the newspapers. It cannot be forgotten, that the mining community, recalling how often they had been mislead by similar rumors, took every precaution to guard against their being deceived in this instance; companies and small camps frequently delegating one of the most experienced and trusty of their number to go and examine what foundation there might be for these flying stories, and report accordingly. And it was on these reports, or intelligence derived through like sources, that people for the most part acted. Sometimes a secret note addressed to a friend advising a hasty visit to the new Dorado, would gain publicity, and forthwith a general scamper would ensue, scores rushing away who never would have thought of going from anything they might see in the public prints. More than once a single letter so received from a precocious adventurer has had the effect to depopulate a farming district to an extent that seriously interfered with the gathering of the harvest. But why this vindication of the newspaper press, or wherefore these excuses for the conduct of our people? Perhaps they did not err in their judgment so widely, or act so very foolishly after all. Let us review a little and see how this is.

Here was a river reaching many hundred miles inland, the banks of which along its lower portion were rich in gold, to all appearance washed down from above. Upon several tributaries of this river good diggings had also

been found. Adjacent to the region traversed by it, and lying between the same mountain ranges were extensive placeres, that had been successfully worked for years. What was there then, so preposterous in supposing an auriferous region existed along the banks of this stream? Was it not reasonable to conclude such was the case? Was not this a fair deduction—an inference warranted by geological science and our gold mining experience? Of course it was; and herein the press has ample justification for the course it pursued, and every Fraser-river adventurer a sufficient reason for the hope that was in him. It must be admitted we were mistaken—possibly in our estimate of the magnitude and value of these mines, though this remains to be proved; but certain it is, we misapprehend their precise locality, and the difficulties we should have to encounter in reaching them. Apart from this, no very great blunder was committed after all. We had what seemed safe data for action; and however we may now speak of it as a delusion, or denounce it as a humbug, it is not always our people have so sound a basis for their financial and commercial speculations, or industrial projects, as had this widely execrated and sufficiently unfortunate Fraser river movement. And although it has become the fashion to rank it with Gold lake expeditions and South sea schemes—projects purely speculative or wholly visionary—it may safely be affirmed that before two years more shall have passed, these mines will redeem themselves from the odium of the comparison, if they do not fully realize the expectations of the pioneer crowd, all of whom sought them too early, and many of whom left them too soon. That this opinion of their future may not seem too sanguine, let us examine for a moment.

THEIR PRODUCTIVENESS AND EXTENT.

If we begin at Fort Hope, and follow up Fraser river to the vicinity of Fort Alexander, we shall have passed over a stretch of country more than 300 miles long, all of which is auriferous. Some pay diggings have been found below Fort Hope, and to what extent the country above the highest point mentioned may be gold producing, has not yet been ascertained. Nearly all the bars within this scope, some of which are very extensive, contain a large amount of pay dirt. The high banks in some places have also shown a good prospect, while gold in small quantities has been found even on the table lands and sides of the mountains. But the gold fields of British Columbia are not confined to the banks of the Fraser. Several of its tributaries are known to abound in the precious metal; the yield of some having been quite as prolific as any part of the main stream itself. The banks of Bridge river, for forty miles up, have furnished very satisfactory diggings, the dust being coarse, of good quality and easily saved. The bars on Thompson's Fork, as high up as Nicholas river, have uniformly paid fair wages. Above that they have not generally, thus far, proved remunerative. Along Nicholas, Bonaparte and Tranquille rivers, all branches of the Fork, the diggings that will pay moderate wages—say four or five dollars per day—may be measured by the acre. On the latter stream parties mining with rockers, averaged five dollars a day, during all last autumn. It has been prospected for forty or fifty miles, showing dirt along all that distance that would pay equally well. Gold has also been found in other directions, and on waters far separated from the Fraser. On the Lillooett river, reaching from one end to the other, are numerous bars on which small wages can be made. The extreme fineness and levity of the dust, however, together with the long continued stage of high water, the bars being generally low, will preclude any chance of successful mining on this stream, unless carried on by some improved process, or during the three or four months preceding the commencement of cold weather.

Such are the limits of the Fraser river gold fields as ascertained by actual exploration. How much they may be enlarged by future discoveries, or how rich these partially prospected streams may eventually prove, is matter for conjecture. That the multitude who resorted to them have been put poorly rewarded for their loss of time and outlay of money—that capital has met with indifferent returns, and merchandise netted but sorry profits, is lamentably true. Yet all this loss, disappointment and disaster, is not to be set down to the narrow limits or poverty of the mines. As has been said, the laborer could not reach the actual mining district until too late in the season for successful operations. Besides, a very large percentage of those who went to Fraser river were either mere speculators and adventurers, or persons mentally indisposed to, if not physically incapable of doing hard work. As to the pecuniary loss attending investments in that quarter, let us ask ourselves how much of this may be traced to the most wild and absurd kind of speculation—to building towns, erecting wharves, and cutting trails where nature never intended, and the requirements of business never called for such improvements? Thousands and hundreds of thousands of dollars were thus spent in futile attempts at building up cities where none were needed, and in ridiculous endeavors at forcing trade into costly and impracticable channels. Let the forced growth of Port Townsend, and the unwholesome impetus giving to nearly every other place on the Sound, producing overtrade and a fictitious rise in real estate—let the acres of ruins and piled water lots at Whatcom, the foolish outlays at Point Roberts, Semiahmoo and Sehome, together with the spirit of reckless expenditure and insane speculation everywhere exhibited, come in for their proper share of the losses incurred by these unfortunates, and which have so generally but unjustly been charged to the account of Fraser river.

INDUCEMENTS TO EMIGRATION.

It being evident, then, that the scope of pay diggings in British Columbia is sufficiently

extensive, the question arises as to their richness, or rather their capacity to give immediate and profitable employment to any considerable population. The practical point to be decided is, whether everything considered, better wages can be realized there than in the mines of California. Of course, it is not to be expected that any person, however much he may have seen of the two countries, or however conversant he may be with their comparative advantages, will assume to advise which should be chosen as a field for mining operations. So much depends on circumstances—the situation of parties, their fitness to endure hardship and exposure, on the increase of facilities for reaching the interior of British Columbia, and a variety of considerations, applying with greater or less force in each individual case, that any advise given on this point would necessarily be qualified to an extent rendering it nearly valueless as a general rule of action. The most that could be expected of one treating on the subject is that a full and candid statement of facts should be given, leaving each one to judge for himself as to the propriety of going or staying. It is the opinion of very many who have visited these northern mines that a hardy and persevering man, being without a mining claim here, or sufficient means to buy into one, might for the next few years make more money there than in California. This, however, is on the supposition that he is capable of not only doing hard work, but also of subsisting on coarse and scanty fare, and that he can be absent for a length of time without serious inconvenience to himself or others; and also, perhaps, on the further condition that cheap and expeditious means of transportation be supplied between the head of steamboat navigation and the mines, since, with the present inadequate means of carriage, the inducements for emigrating to that quarter are greatly diminished, the cost of subsistence in these mines being enormous; not less in the more remote localities than the combined expense of living and the price usually paid for labor in this State. That additional improvements will shortly be made for effecting that object, either by the Colonial government engaging in the work or encouraging others to do so, there is every reason for believing, from the prompt and liberal manner in which it has hitherto responded to demands of this kind; not less than $150,000 having already been expended from the public treasury in opening new routes, or in endeavors to facilitate the carriage of goods into the mines. From present indications, it may be safely inferred that the cost of passage and freight over these routes, heretofore oppressively high, will be reduced one hundred per cent., if not more, during the coming summer, causing a corresponding reduction in the expenses of the miner, and a like increase in the net profits he will be able to realize from his labor. Should this be done, there is little doubt that men of moderate means might, unless going in too great numbers, do quite as well for the present on Fraser river as on any of the streams in our own State. One advantage in these comparatively fresh mines is that every man can be his own master; he can own his claim and work it himself; none need be hirelings, and none need be idle; whereas, in California it is quite different. It is not every miner who can be a proprietor here; nor is it always that a man can get work when he wants it.

It requires capital to buy into a claim here, or else much time must be spent in prospecting before one is found, and then not always with success. There, no persevering and industrious man need have any difficulty on this score; none need hire out their services, or be compelled to go for a length of time without employment. In saying this, of course we mean on the upper Fraser and its tributaries, where alone, the real mines are, and to which most new comers must make their way if they expect to be successful. The writer is aware how little short of seditious this sort of language will be regarded by those who fear the transfer of a few thousand men, the mere shifting the point of consumption from one place on this coast to another, will effect the ruin of California. But still he is of opinion that a candid statement of facts can never work harm, and that labor, while it should never be diverted into profitless channels, should always be left to seek its most remunerative field. There are sufficient discouragements to emigration to the Fraser river mines without recourse to misrepresentation or concealment. Their remote and inaccessible position, the exorbitant prices of provisions prevailing at present, the cold winters and long continued stage of high water, with many minor difficulties and objections, make up a formidable argument against their claims to attention, and will no doubt check any undue diversion of our people that way. Yet in the face of all these discouragements, there is good reason to believe some thousand of the more hardy and adventurous of our population, with an indefinite number of the idle and unemployed, might repair to these northern mines with profit to themselves and no great detriment to the public. Indeed, whatever of damage certain interests may have suffered from the hegira of last year, it cannot be denied that much good resulted to this community in the happy riddance of a large number of worthless and non-producing members effected through its agency.

The cities and towns throughout the State had become sadly infested by a class of lazy, listless drones, some discouraged through want of success, others broken down by dissipation and vice—some vagabonds from force of circumstances, and some from force of habit, yet all more or less a burden to their friends and a nuisance to society, and who, but for some stimulous like this Fraser river excitement, never would have made another honest effort to earn a livelihood; but who, aroused by the prospect of easily acquired wealth, again be-

took themselves to labor, and having thus escaped from the thraldom of a vicious indolence, will be likely, in most cases, to recover their lost standing, and do something for themselves hereafter. And hence, however much individual injury may have resulted from this Frazer river movement, it was not all a loss to the public at large. Deeply as we may deplore certain of its effects, it still left traces of good behind it. Like the winds that sweep over our city, it carried away the pestilential effluvia that otherwise stagnating, become the pregnant agents of disease and death. And it would hardly be matter for regret were our large towns more frequently the subjects of these visitations, so effectual in purging the social atmosphere, and relieving community of its vagrant and vicious members.

IMPROVED PROSPECTS.

Notwithstanding the difficulties in the way of reaching the gold fields of British Columbia are still formidable enough, there is no doubt that they have been greatly diminished since last year, and that the chances for success in mining are manifold better this season than they were last. The locality and character of the diggings are now understood; the peculiarities of the seasons and climate are known; the Indian annoyances have ceased; new routes have been opened, and steamboats placed on the rivers, adding security to life, and cheapening transportation and travel; while comfortable places of entertainment have been opened at all the central points, and at convenient distances along the principal thoroughfares. Of provisions, if not over cheap and abundant, there will always be a sufficient supply to insure the miner from starvation, and at reasonable prices. Lumber, an article so necessary for successful mining, will hereafter be procurable, as also will fresh vegetables, on a due supply of which health is so dependant; ditches and reservoirs will be, and to some extent have already been constructed, affording a steady and ample supply of water on bars where otherwise nothing could be done. Men becoming familiar with the periods of high and low water, will be able to take advantage of the same for the purpose of mining; while acquaintance with the eddies and rapids will enable them to avoid many of the dangers of river navigation. Trade monopolies, so far as any existed, having ceased; and mining licenses having been practically abrogated; what with courts and peace officers at all the more populous points, and the prospect of escorts for the transportation, with places of deposit for the safe keeping of the miner's gold dust, we cannot see what ground there can be for complaint as to existing regulations, or the manner in which life and property are protected in these mines.

Comparing this year with last, there is hardly a single view in which the mining interest and the prospect for success has not greatly changed for the better. This is not said with the remotest view to encouraging parties who may have a tolerable business or situation, or even a good prospect of such in California, to leave the same and repair to these distant gold fields in the hope of bettering their condition. Let no one who has a living business here, or employment at fair wages, or the means of securing either, think for a moment of abandoning the same and resorting to Fraser river. We are not writing for such. Neither are we writing for speculators and traders, or the non-producing fraternity, who seek to live by their wits rather than hard work. To this class the inducements for migrating northward are indeed slender. But to the ill-rewarded hard worker, the unemployed, to all such in fact as come within the category before mentioned, we have thought fit to say British Columbia opens, perhaps, for you as good a labor-field just now as California; venturing to indicate, at the same time, the improved condition of things in that quarter as warranting the suggestion. In the opinion that these mines will better reward any class of laborers whatever, than those of our State, we may be mistaken; but there is little ground for mistake in what has been said as to the increased facilities for travel, and the improved chances for success this season as compared with the past. If we examine the condition and progress of affairs last year a little more in detail, the truth of this remark becomes fully apparent.

In the first place, a large proportion of the miners; on reaching Victoria, were delayed at that point a long time; some waiting for the river to fall, but more because they were unable to proceed, either from want of means to go on the steamers, or the inability of the latter to carry them. Here they idled away their time doing nothing, or engaged in building boats in which, when completed, they embarked for the mines. These craft being small and badly constructed, and as a general thing, still more badly navigated, met with many disasters, often of a fatal character, in crossing the gulf or attempting to ascend the rivers, and were no longer of any value after the owner had reached his point of destination. Taking into the account the original cost of these boats and canoes, varying from fifty to a hundred dollars each, together with the loss of time and property, to say nothing of life, occasioned by this species of navigation, the damage sustained by the miner in being forced to resort to it, was incalculable.

Having reached the mines, or, rather, got as far up the river as practicable, the adventurer found all the bars worth working completely occupied or under water. Thus conditioned, he had either to return, remain an indefinite period doing nothing, or attempt forcing his way further up. A majority chose to come back; many staid until the water went down—a part doing well and a part very little, owing to the impossibility of all getting claims. Of those who pushed on to the Upper Fraser, some going by the Brigade Trail, and others through the cañons, or over the Lillooett route,

all arrived so utterly impoverished, or completely broken down, as to be unfit to do anything. Setting out with scanty stores, these had become exhausted by the length of time they were on the way, or been taken from them by the Indians. Yet, living on fish and berries, such of these men as had fortitude to remain and make a trial, nearly all did well, some taking out large sums of gold, though having only the most rude and imperfect implements to work with. When, later in the season, provisions began to come in, prices ranged from one to two dollars a pound—yet so good were the diggings that the miners were vastly more concerned about the supply than the price. And so these men on the Upper Fraser lingered on through the fall, waiting impatiently for the completion of the new Lillooett trail, when it was expected provisions would be more abundant and cheap. This work, however, not being finished until too late to get in supplies for the winter, nearly the entire population was obliged to vacate this region on the arrival of cold weather.

And here, again, is another item, which in estimating the value of these mines by the yield of last season should be set down to their credit. In the prosecution of this valuable improvement, over five hundred men were abstracted from the mining population and kept on this work throughout the entire season. A good many were, also, in like manner engaged opening trails along the Fraser, or elsewhere, or in other pursuits foreign to the business of mining. This, with the extent to which labor was diverted for the purpose of building boats, digging ditches, chastising the Indians, and various other objects, taken in connection with the fact that much time was foolishly lost in waiting for the falling of the water, and the additional fact that mining operations were mostly confined to the Lower Fraser, the mere entrance to the mines, all goes to show that large allowance should be made when calculating the aggregate yield of these mines the past season.

As has been said, many of these serious interferences with mining industry, as well as much of the heavy expense alluded to, may be avoided the present season. The miner, on reaching Victoria, can proceed at once, and a small cost, directly to the head of steamboat navigation on comfortable steamers, a number of which are already on the route, while one of our first class Sacramento river boats is about leaving to be employed in the same service. With these accommodations the vexatious and ruinous delays at Victoria, the dangerous passage of the Gulf, with the tedious toilsome, and still more perilous ascent of the rivers, with the hard work, exposure and expense incident to travel on this part of the journey in the early day, will be avoided. The portages will also be made the present season with much greater expedition, comfort and economy than before, as a sufficient number of animals will, no doubt, be brought upon them as soon as required. This seems probable from the fact that over three hundred pack animals were wintered at Bonaparte river, for the purpose of being placed on the Lillooett route this spring, while a considerable number have been shipped from San Francisco, and several trains have set out from Oregon for the same destination. With these facilities, then, for reaching the centre of the Fraser gold fields, with the Indian tribes pacified or overawed, and a boundless extent of virgin mines stretched out in every direction, it would seem as if good wages ought to be made there this summer, notwithstanding provisions may be high, and other expenses somewhat greater than in California. For the benefit of such as may feel inclined to try their fortune in that quarter, the best routes to be taken will next be pointed out, to be followed by a notice of the mining rules and regulations in force, and a few practical observations of a general character.

ROUTES TO THE INTERIOR.

Parties bound to the Upper Fraser, that is to say any point over thirty or forty miles above Thompson's Fork, should go by the way of the new Lillooet route, as being not only the most safe and expeditious, but also the cheapest. In fact the route by the river, ascending through the cañons, is nearly impracticable expect at a low stage of water, and even then is attended with much danger and delay, there being several portages where not only the cargo but the boat itself has to be lifted from the water carried over the rocks, and launched above the rapids. A trail has been commenced between Fort Yale and the Forks, which, when completed, as it will be this summer, will afford tolerable facilities for travel between these two points. In going to the vicinity of the Forks this trail or the river must necessarily be taken, but in going to the upper country, to which the great mass of the mining population must repair to find profitable employment, the route indicated should be chosen. The diggings below Thompson river, being mostly confined to the bars along the Fraser, have not capacity to employ more than four or five thousand men, while that portion of them below the cañons, and to which nearly the entire population was restricted last summer, would scarcely afford room for two thirds that number. Hence, in the event of any large influx of people, a majority would be obliged to betake themselves to the Upper Fraser.

Supposing this his point of destination, then, the miner takes the steamer at Victoria and proceeding to Langly, or such other point as this steamer connects with the lighter draft boats running above, he is there transferred to the latter, which carry him to Port Douglas, at the head of steamboat navigation. The distances on the route thus past over are as follows: From Victoria due north, to the mouth of Fraser river, passing through the canal de Harro, 65 miles; from the mouth of the

river to Fort Langley, 25 miles; thence to the mouth of Harrison river 35 miles; up Harrison river 7, and across Harrison lake to Port Douglas, 43 miles; making the entire distance of steamboat travel 175 miles. The time required to make this distance by steamer is about two days—less if the Gulf be crossed during the night. With sail boats or canoes it is a good passage if made in a week or ten days; hence the bad economy of attempting it in this sort of craft, to say nothing of danger, must be obvious to the most inexperienced mariner. At low water, steamboat navigation is somewhat interfered with on the Harrison river by a series of shoals, which at such times causing rapids, it is difficult for even the lightest draft steamers to ascend. At all other seasons such boats go up with the greatest facility, there being plenty of water, and the current scarcely perceptible. The Government has matured a plan for obviating this difficulty, which will be carried into effect the coming autumn. Across the first portage from Port Douglas to Lake Lillooett, 35 miles, there is a mule trail. This trail, constructed last year at a heavy cost to the Colonial Government, leads through a dense wilderness, and being generally in good condition, can be crossed by pack trains in about two days. Over this part of the route there is canoe navigation, by means of the Lillooet triver, connecting Harrison and Lillooett lake. But it is difficult and hazardous, especially when the stream is high, and many lives were lost, last summer, in attempts to ascend it; but there was then no other mode of getting over this portage, there being not even an Indian path across it. Now it is otherwise, and though packing is rather high at present, it will no doubt be reduced as the season advances, and should in no event tempt parties to try the dangerous alternative offered by the navigation of this fatal river. The price of packing over this portage, last season, was eight cents a pound; this year it will probably be less, as the number of animals will be greatly increased. The cause of these high rates was the scarcity, or rather entire absence of grass in this vicinity, compelling the owners of animals to purchase hay and grain, at heavy expense, for their subsistence.

Having reached Lilooett Lake, travelers are passed over in small boats, animals and large lots of goods in scows—passage $2, freight half cent a pound. The modes of conveyance and the prices charged on all the lakes, of which there are three along this line, are the same. From Lake Lilooett to Lake Anderson, 25 miles, is another mule trail. Packing, however, on this is much less than on the other, the distance being shorter, the road easier, and feed more plentiful. At the south end of this portage are the Lilooett Meadows, consisting of several thousand acres of magnificent prarie land covered with a heavy growth of grass, fit alike for haymaking or pasturage. Approaching the other end, the forest begins to open and bunch grass shows itself in considerable quantities, affording ample feed for stock, and rendering their keep much less costly than on the first portage. This part of the journey can be made comfortably in a day and a half or even a day by footmen, the road, for the most part, always being in good condition. Having crossed this portage, we arrive at Lake Anderson, 16 miles long. Over it, next comes the short portage, one and a fourth mile long, with a wagon road and a team in readiness to convey freight over at the same rate as on the lakes. Having crossed it, the traveller is brought to the last and largest lake of the group, being Lake Seton, 18 miles long, and extending to within four miles of Fraser river. From its foot, good trails extend in every direction into the mines, and all parts of the interior. Here also animals can be procured at low rates for packing, large bands being constantly kept for that purpose. Though the cost of transporting goods will vary with distance, it is uniformly less here than along the route further south, since at this point animals coming in from Oregon accumulate, and grass is abundant, growing not only in the bottoms, but also on the prairies, and even against the sides of the mountains. Traveling and packing through this region is not at all difficult, the country being open and the trails keeping along on the table lands, often for miles without interruption.

But having piloted the miner thus far, he may safely be left to shift for himself, since he is now over the most difficult part of his journey, and pretty well advanced into what may be considered the gold fields, proper of British Columbia. Indeed, when he shall have arrived at the terminus of the Lilooett route he will be, longitudinally, at the centre of the Fraser river mines, with, at least, one hundred and fifty miles of auriferous country to the north, and fully as far above the first diggings met with in ascending the river. Here in the enjoyment of a healthful and invigorating climate; with an atmosphere exempt from sudden change of temperature and undisturbed by storms; encouraged by liberal mining regulations, and protected by impartial laws; in the midst of a beautiful open country and wide-spread virgin mines, the adventurer may reasonably anticipate a success commensurate with his efforts, and may justly consider himself unfortunate if he fails to reap an ample reward for all his loss of time, his heavy expens and toil.

LIBERAL POLICY TO BE PURSUED.

As has been stated, England, no doubt, entertains the purpose of carrying out a variety of grand projects in her British American possessions. The consummation of these plans will, from their very nature, involve a necessity for populating as speedily as practicable her territories on the North Pacific. As a means of hastening that end, she will be impelled to the adoption of a liberal policy in governing the colonies about springing up in that region. This she has signified her intention of doing, in the most open and positive

manner, and not satisfied that the world should remain in doubt as to these her beneficent designs, or be left to infer them from any vague and apocryphal authority, the Colonial Secretary, speaking the sentiments of the home government, has enjoined on the representative of the crown in that quarter a strict compliance with these views in all his official conduct and transactions. And not on a single occasion only, have the instructions of this functionary been made to embody these the desires of the Imperial Parliament on this subject. The entire dispatches issued from his office breathe the same spirit, revealing the earnest wish of the government in the premises, and giving assurance that a broad and generous policy is to be impressed on the administration of public affairs in these provinces. The system of measures already initiated for the regulation of trade, the management of the mines, the disposition of the public lands, and the protection of the various leading interests, are such as will be likely to invite capital, foster industry, stimulate enterprise, encourage immigration, and lead to a speedy development of the resources, and a rapid and permanent settlement of the country. In all their public acts, it must be conceded the home government has thus far evinced an earnest desire and a firm determination to advance the prosperity of these colonies, securing to their inhabitants all those civil rights which the English so eminently enjoy, and conceding to them the largest political liberty compatible with their position as a dependency of the empire. Nor is this liberal policy to be confined in its operation to her own people. England welcomes to these colonies every class of foreigners, guaranteeing them the same social, commercial and industrial privileges as secured to her own citizens, and that whether they come as mere adventurers, or with a view to permanent settlement. Especially has this kind and conciliatory disposition been evinced towards Americans, who have been particularized as a desirable population, on account of their experience in mining, and their usually industrious and energetic habits. So solicitous has the government seemed for the maintenance of a good understanding with this class, that the authorities, more particularly the naval forces, have been cautioned against indulging in any undue display of power, or the wanton commission of any act calculated to awaken opposition, or lead to a conflict between themselves and those of a different nationality. It is also suggested in this connection that the Governor, availing himself of his influence and popularity with the Americans, might readily induce them to coöperate with him at all times in enforcing the law and preserving order; and furthermore, that since the adoption of a more popular mode of governing may soon be rendered expedient, it would be well for that official to provide for the election of a legislative assembly, and call to his aid a council, part of which should be composed of miners, chosen by themselves. These declarations of the mother country, so oft repeated and positive, sufficiently foreshadow her purposes in regard to these colonies, and may be taken as an earnest of the policy to be observed in the future conduct of their affairs. Certain it is, reposing in these assurances, the emigrant may repair thither confident that he will be amplied protected and fairly dealt with, while every facility will be afforded him to engage in mining, or acquire a portion of the public lands, with a prospect of participating to some extent in framing the laws and regulations by which he shall be governed.

LICENSES, DUTIES, SUFFERANCES, &c.

This entire class of imposts and permits were levied or allowed by Gov. Douglas, in his twofold capacity as Agent of the Hudson's Bay Company, and representative of the Crown. Thus, the license to mine, the permission to import goods, and the sufferance to navigate the inland waters of British Columbia, were granted by virtue of his viceroyal character, and the funds accruing formed a part of the public revenue. This fact is announced in his proclamation on the subject, wherein he states that these duties are imposed by virtue of authority duly conferred upon him, and for the purpose of providing means to defray the public expenses of the Colony. Head-money, licenses to trade, &c.. are presumed to have been exacted by the Governor in his capacity as the executive of the Company, under warrant of their claim to the exclusive right to trade in the territory, and of their being in the legal possession of the same. It is true, the validity of this claim has constituted the subject of much popular discussion, speculation and complaint, but the fact that its exercise has been acquiesced in by the Government for so many years, seems a virtual acknowledgment of its genuineness, a conclusion at which those adversely interested in the question would seem to have arrived, since no legal measures have ever been taken for testing its soundness, not even the law officers of the Crown being willing to institute proceedings for that purpose, on Government account.

The Company argue that the clause in their charter, conferring upon them the exclusive right of trade with the Indians, extends by implication also to the whites, the latter not being mentioned, though intended, for the reason that there were at the time no whites in the territory thus subjected to their jurisdiction; and, that at all events, the exercise of this right carries with it the force of law from long and uninterrupted usage. Be that as it may, it is now too late to call in question the legality of these acts, or to insist that they were in their nature usurpations or exactions, since whatever there may have been in them illegitimate and informal, has been cured and legalized by subsequent proclamations of the Executive, sanctioned by the Home Government.

The amount of head money charged by the Company was $2, for every person entering the mines. This, however, with all trade licen-

ses, except such as spring from municipal regulations, being now discontinued, requires no further notice. The following is the schedule of duties payable on goods imported into British Columbia. All kinds of fresh meat, fish, fruits and vegetables, lumber, hay, quicksilver, poultry and live stock; all sorts of farming implements, seeds, plants, salt, books and papers, cloths, baggage, professional implements, &c., are admitted free of duties. On all other articles a ten per cent. *ad valorem* duty is charged, with the following exceptions: Flour 50 cts. on every 196 lbs.; beans and peas 12½ cts. on every 100 lbs., and every kind of grain to be used as food, one-half that amount. Liquors are required to pay a duty of $1 per gallon; [illegible]ces 50 cts.; ale, beer, porter, and cider 12½ cts. Victoria and Esquimalt being free ports, all goods landed there are exempt from duty, vessels simply paying the ordinary port charges. Vessels destined for British Columbia can pay the duties at either of these ports, or proceed direct to Queenborough, on Fraser river, which is now a port of entry, and make payment there.

Touching the sufferance extended to foreign bottoms, allowing them to enter Fraser river, Governor Douglas in the exercise of the discretionary powers conferred upon him, so far interfered with the navigation laws of England as to permit steamers and large vessels, whatever their flag, to clear for Fort Langley on payment of $12 each trip, small boats $6, a course in which he was amply justified by the pressure of circumstances and the exigencies of the times. As a condition, steamers were required to pay the Company $2 head-money, for each passenger they should carry; to stipulate that they would convey none who had not taken out a mining license and paid $5, being one month's advance thereon, and also that they would carry no goods except those of the Company or such as they might permit.

For the privilege of entering the mines every person was required to pay a royalty of $5 a month. But this, as was also the case with head-money, was not very rigidly enforced. Passeugers proceeding to Fraser river on the steamers were obliged to pay these dues, the vessel being held accountable therefor, but in most other cases they were evaded, and in very few instances was more than one month's license ever paid. Hereafter, it is probable, this impost will be entirely dispensed with, an export duty being substituted in accordance with the popular desire, and in compliance with a suggestion of the Home Goverment to that effect.

MINING RULES AND REGULATIONS.

For the purpose of making temporary rules and regulations, and carrying out such permanent ones as government may determine upon, a Crown Commissioner for the goldfields has been appointed, having a requisite number of assistants. The size of mining claims was in the first instance fixed by government, being limited to 144 square feet to each person. The object of restricting the miners to so small an area was that they might be kept in as compact bodies as possible, since they could thus more easily be supplied with provisions, and the better protect themselves against the Indians. Subsequently these limits were enlarged, and the size of claims fixed at 25 feet frontage in rivers, and 25 feet of the bed of a creek or ravine, and 20 feet square of a table land or flats, to each person. These regulations, however, have been but little regarded, the miners going on and fixing the size of their claims, and establishing such rules for holding and working them as they deemed expedient, a practice with which the Commissioner and his assistants have not interfered to any great extent. It is probable however, that the authorities will assume a greater control when affairs shall become a little more settled, introducing a comprehensive and well digested system, based upon a general survey of the gold fields, and made to conform to that now in force in Australia, with such modifications as experience may suggest or circumstances require.

Indeed, the Governor has been instructed by the Colonial Secretary to see that a proper system for managing and working the mines be devised and brought into force to the end that this branch of industry be controlled by uniform and well-known rules, rather than by a variety of local regulations, dependent on usage and chance. In maturing this system he has been advised to avail himself of the services of Chief Justice Bigbie, and to call to his aid a number of miners, to the end that he may have the benefit of the legal learning of the one and the practical experience of the other, and thus construct a mining code which, while it shall duly guard the rights of the Crown, will secure to the miner every possible advantage. In this manner a plan would, no doubt, be instituted, which, from its uniformity and stability, would prove alike satisfactory to labor and capital. On the whole it may fairly be concluded that a liberal policy will be adopted, and that government interference, so far as exerted, will be for the convenience and protection of the miner.

NATURAL HISTORY AND PRODUCTS.

Although British Columbia affords a grand field for the explorations of the traveler and the study of the artist, it holds out little inducment to the student of Natural History, the absence of nearly every kind of animal life being strikingly apparent. One may travel for days through the woods, or over the plains and lakes and scarcely see a living thing, except, perhaps, fish, which only at certain seasons are abundant. These remarks, however, only apply to the interior, since along the sea shore animated nature is more prolific, the waters being in every species of marine production especially abundant. Amongst the land animals the principal kinds met with are deer, of several varities, the elk, bear—both black and grizzly—panther, lynx, wild-cat,

wolf, and mountain sheep. The latter is a large animal weighing, when full grown, several hundred pounds. It is covered with long hair, resembling coarse wool, and supplied with enormous crooked horns, upon which it is said to strike when throwing itself from precipices in seeking to escape pursuit.

The flesh is esteemed equal to that of the domesticated sheep, but it is rarely the hunter makes a prize of one, or even gets a sight of them, they being exceedingly solitary in their habits, keeping always on the tops of the most wild and rugged mountains. Even when the snows fall deep, they do not come down as do other animals, seeking the milder climate and more abundant feed of the valleys. There are also foxes, marmots, rabbits, minks and martins, and along the streams beaver and otter, though these animals are now very scarce, as well as shy, having been so much hunted for their peltries and furs. Amongst the inferior animals are skunks, squirrels, mice and a singular species of bush-tailed rat, said to be naturally mischievous, a reputation it seems ambitious to deserve, meddling with everything about the traveler's camp at night, and running over his person with the greatest familiarity. These easy habits are probably owing to the immunity from harm guaranteed it by the Indian, who scruples not to feed upon every other form of animated matter, save only the rat and the raven. These, owing to a natural repugnance, or more likely in his case, to some superstitious notion, the Indian never eats, even in his extremest need.

While animals are scarce in this region, of birds it may be said there are almost none, since, with the exception of water-fowl, you may not see one in a day's travel. Geese, ducks, swans and brant, however, gather in clouds about the lakes, and inlets, in the proper season. Pelicans, cranes and loons are also to be found about these places at all times. Of the feathered tribe, are occasionally seen the eagle, hawk, cormorant and raven. Owls are at times heard, but not often. There are, also, a few woodpeckers, bluejays, larks and a small dusky ground-bird, with a few quail, and a good many grouse, the latter always fat and tender. The raven resembles that of California, being large, and uttering the same harsh croak. Near the sea, gulls and several other kinds of aquatic animals hover about in great numbers, affording the natives much acceptable food by means of their flesh and eggs. The pelican being a clumsey bird, also falls an easy prey to the Indian.

Fish, small and of an inferior kind, are plentiful in the lakes and streams at all seasons, but salmon, the only really valuable fish, is abundant only from June till September, being best and most numerous in August. This is a most delicious fish, being large, rich and oily, easily caught and readily cured, and hence most valuable both for the white and Indian. An inferior kind of salmon is taken during the fall months, called the hook-bill, from its having a beak like a parrot. It has small, sharp teeth, is covered with livid spots, and its flesh is soft and flabby. The whites do not care to eat it, nor is it much relished by the natives. Fine trout is caught in the streams during winter. The Indians adopt various plans for taking the larger fish, spearing, the wier and basket being the most common. A small species of smelt, but little worth, swarms in some places; sturgeon of large size and excellent quality are frequently caught in the Fraser. In Lake Okinagan, and in all the streams along the Oregon trail, trout weighing from one to two pounds and of fine flavor, are caught with the greatest ease, men taking them out with nets by the wagon load, and by wading into the water, catching them with their hands without difficulty. In the inlets and all tide waters, fish of every variety abound in incredible quantities; nor are oysters, clams, mussels, or any other kind of shell fish wanting. Of reptiles and insects, except mosquitoes, confined to the Lower Fraser, and a few other localities, British Columbia has but few. There are some rattle snakes, with a few others of a more harmless kind. The lizzard seen in California, is not common, nor is the tarrantula, or centipede met with. Indeed, the whole country is remarkably exempt from both animals and reptiles of a hurtful or obnoxious kind, being in this respect, if no other, a very desirable abode for man.

TREES, PLANTS, FRUITS, &c.

The Southern, which may also be called the rainy portion of British Columbia, is a densely wooded country, both the mountains and plains, with the exception of a few inconsiderable prairies, being covered with thick and stately forests. So closely do the trees stand, and withal so tall and straight, that the united navy yards of the world might draw thence their supplies for years, without more than partially exhausting these spacious and majestic forests. To the north and east there is less timber, the country being open and the only wood met with, except in the bottoms, being a species of pitch pine scattered sparsely over its surface. It never grows large, being not over a foot or two in diameter, and is not much esteemed for making lumber, though being straight and of suitable size, it is very convenient for building log cabins and for similar uses. Many of the prairies in these sections are entirely destitute of trees, although the growth along the streams is in most places abundant and varied. The prevailing timber everywhere is pine, fir and spruce, of different varieties, with hemlock and cedar, and a small sprinkling of birch, oak, ash, yew and maple. In the swamps and along the water courses willow, alder, cotton-wood and balm of Gilead are found; the latter always attracting notice, its unctuous buds glittering with healing gum and filling the air with balmy fragrance. To this tree the native tribes, as have the whites from the earliest ages, ascribe many medicinal virtues, assigning it an important place in their pharmacy. It here grows to a majestic size.

The alder also grows up into a tall slender tree, free from limbs, and hence useful for fencing purposes and easily cut into fire-wood. The yew, very scarce, is a hard, tough wood, resembling hickory. The Indian uses it for his bow, and the white man for pick and axe helves, it being about the only stuff found in the country suitable for these and similar purposes. The maple and ash are both of the soft varieties and fit for little else than fence and fire-wood. The bark of the birch is full of a resinous substance, which readily igniting and burning with a bright blaze, is used by the Indians for kindling fires and for torches. From the cedar rails, shingles, and even clapboards, are easily split; while the spruce and fir, the latter also called Oregon fir and Douglas pine, afford the best material for piles, spars and every species of lumber. The oak being the same as that found in California, is mostly confined to the country east of the Cascades, and even there it is not abundant. The redwood, or anything resembling it nearer than cedar, does not grow in British Columbia. Everywhere the size of the timber varies with altitnde; that in the lower valleys being of gigantic dimensions, and dwindling, as we ascend the mountains, into mere shrubbery, until, at a height of five or six thousand feet, we reach the limit of vegetation—the line of eternal snow.

Although British Columbia shows great poverty in the animal kingdom, the vegetable world is sufficiently varied and prolific. Indeed, it is not often, except in tropical climates, that a richer botany is presented to the student of nature. Flowering shrubs, esculent roots, medicinal plants, wild fruits and berries are everywhere abundant. In its Flora it strongly resembles California, the prairies being covered and the woods filled in the spring with the same superfluity of gorgeous flowers, though there, owing to the more timely rains, they are not so short lived as with us. Nearly everywhere in the forests, the wild lilac and the snow-drop, and on the plains, the wormwood and cactus are seen as in the southern portions of this State. For curative and like purposes, the natives make use of a great variety of plants, though the medicine-men rely much on their powers of exorcising—being simply the mesmeric influence they are able to exert for driving away the *skookums*, or evil spirits, that are supposed to be the cause of disease and death. There are a variety of shrubs from which they make tea to be used as a beverage, and some of which, to the taste, is not unlike the drink made from the Chinese leaf. In the bark of the tender hemlock they find a remedy for diarrhœa, while the young sprouts of the raspberry, is eaten in the spring, for the purpose of correcting disorders of the blood. The leaf of the bear-berry is dried, either in the sun or over a fire, and then smoked in a pipe, being mixed with tobacco, when they have any. The effect produced, though very slight, is similar to that of tobacco, yet it does not taste at all like that substance, being in fact quite insipid and nearly tasteless. Of roots, the Indians have the potato, introduced amongst them by the English, and a variety indigenous to the country, the most valuable of which is the carumass, resembling a small white onion. Their potatoes, of which nearly every tribe raises some, are excellent, being of the species known as lady-fingers, that never fail to be dry and solid when grown in a proper soil. The wappatoo, the root of the fern, and of certain flags, some of which are not only palatable, but highly nutricious, are also baked and eaten.

But of all the comestibles in the vegetable world, the most valuable to the Indian are the wild fruits and berries. On these, next to fish, he is morally dependant for subsistence, and fortunate for him it is, that they grow so plentiful, and last for so great a portion of the year. Of fruits, he has the wild plum and cherry, the crab-apple, the prickly-pear, and several other kinds; while of berries, there is an almost endless variety, including the strawberry and raspberry—coming earliest in the Spring—the blackberry, whortleberry, blueberry, scarlet currant, the gooseberry, bearberry, the sallal and many others; these being the kinds most common and abundant. Cranberries, also, abound in the marshy places. Of all these the sallal is perhaps the most acceptable and serviceable to the Indian, as it is easily gathered, very nourishing, readily preserved by means of drying, and lasts the latest in the season—hanging on the bushes until December. The leaves of the bearberry are dried, as above mentioned, and used as tobacco, being then called *quer-lo-e-chintl*. There is also a singular fruit called the Oregon grape, growing on a low bush, having serrated prickly leaves. It is worthy of mention only as a curiosity, being so sour, even when ripe, that nothing can eat it. The foregoing, by no means fill the catalogue of fruits, and berries growing wild in British Columbia, yet they serve to show that nature has been generous in this department, and prove that the Indian, thus supplied, but for his indolent and improvident habits never need want, much less perish, as he sometimes does, through sheer starvation, during the season of winter.

GRASSES.

The indigenous grasses of British Columbia are very similar to those found native in California. Wild timothy or prairie grass, sometimes mixed with clover, covers the rich bottoms and prairies to the south, bunch grass growing with the greatest luxuriance, even to the tops of the mountains, throughout all the open country. Swamp grass of different kinds, some being fine and nutricious, others almost as coarse as tules, abounds along the borders of the lakes and in other marshy places. On the Smass prairies about 30 miles southeast of Fort Langley, are many thousand acres covered with wild timothy and other nourishing grasses, from which hay of excellent quality could be made with the greatest facility, the growth being very thick and standing four

or five feet high. Along the Chilliwhaock, a small river entering the Fraser five miles below the mouth of the Harrison, are also fine opportunities for cutting hay, the grass being equally as good, though not so much of it as on the Smass. Hay cut here could easily be got to market—the Chilliwhaock being navigable for light draft boats for some distance. The best place, however, for making hay, market and facilities for cutting being considered, is the Lilooett meadows, at the head of the Lilooett lake. Here the grass is equally as good, and nearly as abundant as at the Smass, while the great number of pack animals employed will always create a demand for it at remunerative prices. The soil on all these prairies consists of a rich sandy loom, rendering them the most valuable districts for agricultural purposes of any in the Colony, except, perhaps, some of the valleys in country of the Similkameen and the Okinagan, a region that has advanced much in importance since the recent ascent of the Columbia to Priest's Rapids by the steamer *Col. Wright* on her late trial trip, an event of consequence to the entire country east of the Dalls, and particularly to that under consideration, the head of steamboat navigation having thus been brought within a short distance of Fort Okinagan. All these fine tracts of land offer great inducements to settlers, they being equally adapted to the raising of grain and stock, government allowing them to be occupied until such time as they can be surveyed and brought into market. Cattle require no feed here during the winter, except such as they can themselves pick, while grains and fruits of every description grow with as much thrift and as little culture as in any other part of the world.

MINERALS.

Although gold at present forms the most attractive, as well as the most ready source of wealth in British Columbia, it by no means constitutes the only valuable mineral in the country. A great variety of other metals, though as yet but little sought for, have been met with, some in quantities indicating large deposits. Silver ore of the richest quality, has been found at several localities, portions of which, on being analyzed have shown ninety per cent. of pure silver. At two points on the Lilooett river, and also at a place near Kamloops, ore of this description has been taken from veins cropping out at the surface. On the east bank of the Lilooett river, at the outlet of the Little lake, is a silver vein of large size, well known to the Indians in the vicinity, and from which a Mexican, a man of scientific attainments, and well versed in the working of silver mines, took several specimens last fall, pronouncing them unusually rich. Specimens of copper, nearly virgin, have been obtained on the Fraser, above the Fountain, and on the river opposite that place, lignite, or bituminous wood, of the earthy variety, exists in such quantities as to have been used by the miners for fuel. It is found in detached pieces, worn round like pebbles; is of a brownish-black color, nearly as light as water, very friable, and burns freely; when blown it sends forth a light blaze, whence it would probably be useful for blacksmithing purposes. Iron, coal, and traces of cinnabar are frequently met with.

Platinum, agates, cornelians, and quartz, both crystalized and massive, occur, in all parts of the interior. Excellent lime-stone, marble of the purest variety and very accessible, granite and many other varieties of building stone are common. But since this class of productions cannot be rendered immediately available, as agents or wealth, it will hardly be necessary to enumerate them more fully at present.

Mineral and warm springs are features of the country. One of the latter, on the trail, 22 miles from Port Douglass, on the Lilooett trail, has been found highly beneficial, in cases of dispœptia and rheumatism. The water, in a volume of about four square inches, issues from a conglomerate rock, at a temperature of 190°, with a gurgling sound, coming at intervals from the interior of the rock. The water smells of sulphur, and is slightly impregnated with magnesia, lime, salt, etc. The Indians resort to this spring at all times, bathing in, and drinking freely of the water, having, to all appearance, great faith in its remedial properties.

THE MINES AND MINING PROSPECTS.

Before concluding the present series of articles, it may perhaps be well to make some further mention of the gold deposits in British Columbia, and to inquire after the mining prospects the ensuing summer, as based on the latest and most reliable intelligence from that quarter. Space will not permit of any detailed statements or lengthened investigation of this subject at present; yet, as the shipments of gold dust out of the country, may be considered a very fair index of mining prosperity, let the sums transmitted through the two Express companies doing business in Victoria, for the month of April, being the latest statistics we have on the subject, be taken as evidence on that point. Between the 11th day of April, then, and the 10th day of May, these two houses brought down $195,000, on account of shippers. During the same period, it is estimated that $75,000 additional, came in private hands, making $270,000, exported from Victoria to this port, in these 30 days. Meantime, at least, $30,000 more was carried away, by the steamer *Constitution*, and by sailing vessels running to different points on the Sound, in payment of cattle, lumber, vegetables, and other commodities, largely imported into Victoria and British Columbia, from Oregon and Washington Territory, giving a total of $300,000 exported during the month of April, and which may be supposed to represent the product of the mines for the preceding month of March. If we further suppose there were $3,000 men—rather a high estimate—at work in the mines digging out this amount, and that they labored twenty out of the thirty-one days in that

month—another high estimate, Sundays and stormy weather being deducted, this would give an average of $5 a day, to the man, a return comparing favorably with the wages realized in our own mines; while it will not be pretended, whatever other hardships men may have to endure, that the labor of mining is as severe in British Columbia as here, operations there being mostly confined to a foot or two of the top dirt.

That a few should have returned from the Upper Fraser, dissatisfied, as is represented to have been the case, is not surprising, considering that over two thousand hurried to that section in advance of supplies, and many of them before the winter was fairly over. It is obvious those who had already returned to Victoria, must have done most of their prospecting in the month of March, or early in the month of April, at a time when provisions were yet scarce and the cold weather had hardly abated.

The following letter, one of several recently received from the Upper Fraser, will serve to illustrate the character of the diggings in that quarter, and to show in what estimation they are held by a practical miner, who has now been in that country over a year. The purport of the other letters is very similar to that of the one presented. *Rocher Rouge*, near which place the writer was encamped, is about 150 miles above the Fountain, and 160 above De Rous' ranch, the place mentioned in this letter:

UPPER FRASER RIVER, April, 1859.

As you wished me to write if I went above mountain I send you a few lines by a man going down to Port Douglas after goods. I don't know the day of the month, but it is the last of April. We left Jo DeRushe's ranch about four weeks ago, and came up on the east side of the river, packed three horses, and were about a week coming up. Found ice on the trail coming down the steep hills and had to unload a number of times. We came by the *slide*, and found trouble getting by that place, and I would advise parties coming to go round, as there is an easier road by going a little further to the east. I have heard of a shorter route being found, keeping on the west side of the river and leaving it near Bridge river, and taking a cut off back of the mountains, but I don't know how it is. We prospected some coming up and found a good show all along, but concluded not to stop, as we heard it was better up here. It is not much use to prospect, for the gold is too fine to save with a pan, and you cannot tell unless you work some with a rocker, and we did not want to stop and make one then. In some places we found coarse gold, but thought we had better come on to this place. This bar has no name; it is a little below what they call Rocher Rouge. While one of my partners and a Frenchman went above prospecting I stopped here with the other and cut down a tree and made a rocker, and we have worked eight or nine days, making eleven dollars a day to the hand, but the gold is fine, and we loose a great deal; with quicksilver, I think we could make an ounce. But the diggings are not deep, and I do not think will last long; we only wash about a foot on the top, then the dirt grows poorer, but we have not tried it very deep yet, and there may be a layer of pay dirt below. With sluices big wages could be made here, for a while at least, but there are no saws, and the timber is very poor here, nothing much but poplar and cottonwood near the river. There is some scrubby pine back, but it is not much worth. The country here is not mountainous as on the Lower Fraser; it is sandy and knolls and hills, and plenty of grass and some good spots for farming. It is a very pleasant country, but hard to be reached, and I would not advise those in California who are doing well to leave to come here, for it is a long journey to come and costs a great deal, and then the seasons here are short, nothing to be done for four or five months in the winter.

The cost of living, too, is great, nothing to be bought for less than a dollar a pound, and most things costing a dollar and a half, and in this climate men eat a great deal. If we had to buy our provisions, I think it would cost us four or five dollars a day. We have enough to last six weeks, by which time we are in hopes goods will be cheaper. The high prices are now owing to packing animals being scarce, though there will be several hundred horses on this route in a few days, when packing will be lower. There is plenty of grass here, and animals can be kept cheap. The Indians have a good many horses, but they ride them to death, and they are not fit for anything.

My partner, who has been 25 or 30 miles above, found good prospects and larger gold, and we think it washes down, and that a better gold country must lay north of this. He says it is a beautiful country and more timber up there. We shall stop here and try to get in sluices, when I think we can double our present wages, though it may not pay to go to that expense unless the diggings prove deeper. There are a good many coming up this way, though but few have got thus far as yet. Some have gone above us, and are at work, and some have gone back not able to stand the pressure of the hard work and high prices of goods. I think we shall make a good summer's work here, if we can get provisions, of which there is no doubt. We have brought along twine for making fish nets, and expect to catch plenty of salmon this summer, with these and some wild fruits we shall get along well if the mines do not disappoint us. The Indians are not at all troublesome; they are a better race than those further south, but we have seen but little of them as yet. They seem a little shy, especially the women. I have seen some of them have pieces of gold, but not to amount to anything. It is not wash gold, and must have come from dry diggings, or high on the banks.

We found snow on our way up, about five or six inches deep at places on the trail, but it soon disappeared. There has been thick ice in the river, but it has now left and the weather is mild and pleasant; no stormy weather of any account since we left. The Indians say this has been a hard winter. From what I can learn, the summers here are very warm and have seasonable rains. If so, I think plenty of vegetables could be raised, as the ground looks good.

My advice to those in your State is, to remain where they are until this country is more explored and better roads are built to get into it. J. M. D.

The foregoing letter, as has been stated, is one of a number lately received from the Upper Fraser, the tone of some of which is more encouraging, and of others less so, than that of the one here presented, this having been selected for publication because it fairly represents the average opinion of the whole, and because the writer is a candid man and an experienced miner, whose opinions are entitled to respect and credence.